

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable consideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3, 5-8 and 10-17 are presently pending in this application, Claims 1-3, 5-7 and 10-17 having been amended, and Claims 9 and 18 having been canceled by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 9 and 18 were objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(c), as being of improper dependent form; Claim 18 was objected to because of the informalities; Claims 1-3, 5-9 and 11-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Archibald (U.S. Patent 4,290,574); Claim 10 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Archibald in view of Miura (U.S. Patent 5,416,969).

Claims 1-3, 5-7 and 10-17 have been amended herein. These claim amendments find clear support in the original specification, claims and drawings. For example, amended Claims 1-3, 5-7 and 10-17 are believed to be supported by Figures 1-3. Hence, no new matter is believed to be added thereby. If, however, the Examiner disagrees, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned who will be happy to work in a joint effort to derive mutually satisfactory claim language.

Briefly recapitulating, amended Claim 1 is directed to an assembly including *inter alia* support means for supporting the first object above the second object, the support means including first, second and third protrusions protruding from the first object and first, second and third pairs of protrusions protruding from the second object, wherein each protrusion of the first, second and third protrusions of the first object and each protrusion of the first, second and third pairs of protrusions of the second object have a substantially spherically-shaped extremity, and when the first and second objects are in an operational position so that

the first object is above the second object, the substantially spherically-shaped extremities of the first, second and third protrusions of the first object are in contact with the substantially spherically-shaped extremities of the first, second and third pairs of protrusions, respectively, of the second object.

The outstanding Office Action asserts that Archibald discloses an assembly as recited in Claim 1, but Archibald is not believed to teach “support means for supporting the first object above the second object, the support means including first, second and third protrusions protruding from the first object and first, second and third pairs of protrusions protruding from the second object, wherein each protrusion of the first, second and third protrusions of the first object and *each protrusion of the first, second and third pairs of protrusions of the second object have a substantially spherically-shaped extremity, and when the first and second objects are in an operational position so that the first object is above the second object, the substantially spherically-shaped extremities of the first, second and third protrusions of the first object are in contact with the substantially spherically-shaped extremities of the first, second and third pairs of protrusions, respectively, of the second object,*” as recited in amended Claim 1 (emphasis added in Italics). On the other hand, Archibald is believed to disclose the members 18, 20, 22 of the first plate 10 where the member 20 is a pair of cylindrical members and the member 22 is a rectangular boss.¹ Thus, the members 20, 22 clearly do not have substantially spherically-shaped extremities. Furthermore, the member 22 and one of the members 18 are clearly dissimilar and unassociated. Clearly, the member 22 and one of the members 18 cannot be paired in the contacting relationship with any of the members 32, 34, 36 to prevent pivotal motion of the

¹ See Archibald, Column 3, line 1 to, line 26.

plate 26.² Therefore, the subject matter recited in amended Claim 1 is clearly distinguishable from Archibald.

Moreover, Miura discloses a sliding contact producing method. However, Miura does not teach “support means for supporting the first object above the second object, the support means including first, second and third protrusions protruding from the first object and first, second and third pairs of protrusions protruding from the second object, wherein each protrusion of the first, second and third protrusions of the first object and each protrusion of the first, second and third pairs of protrusions of the second object have a substantially spherically-shaped extremity, and when the first and second objects are in an operational position so that the first object is above the second object, the substantially spherically-shaped extremities of the first, second and third protrusions of the first object are in contact with the substantially spherically-shaped extremities of the first, second and third pairs of protrusions, respectively, of the second object,” as recited in amended Claim 1. Therefore, the subject matter recited in amended Claim 1 is clearly distinguishable from Miura as well.

Turning to amended Claim 10, amended Claim 10 is directed to a method for supporting a first object on a second object including making first, second and third indentations in the first object, subsequently fitting first, second and third metal balls each having a substantially ball-shaped extremity into the first, second and third indentations, respectively, made in the first object, wherein a center of each of the first, second and third metal balls of the first object defines a vertex of a first triangle, making first, second and third pairs of indentations in the second object, subsequently fitting a substantially ball-shaped extremity of each of the first, second and third pairs of metal balls into the first, second and third pairs of indentations, respectively, made in the second object, wherein the substantially

² See Archibald, Column 4, line 11 to, line 16.

ball-shaped extremity of each metal ball of the first, second and third pairs of the metal balls has a center and midpoints between connecting lines connecting the centers of each pair of the metal balls of the first, second and third pairs of the metal balls define vertices of a second triangle which is substantially identical to the first triangle and placing the substantially ball-shaped extremity of each of the first, second and third metal balls of the first object into supporting contact on the substantially ball-shaped extremities of the first, second and third pairs of the metal balls, respectively, of the second object.

Archibald discloses kinematic restraint. However, Archibald is not believed to teach “making first, second and third indentations in the first object, subsequently fitting first, second and third metal balls each having a substantially ball-shaped extremity into the first, second and third indentations, respectively, made in the first object, wherein a center of each of the first, second and third metal balls of the first object defines a vertex of a first triangle, making first, second and third pairs of indentations in the second object, subsequently fitting a substantially ball-shaped extremity of each of the first, second and third pairs of metal balls into the first, second and third pairs of indentations, respectively, made in the second object, wherein the substantially ball-shaped extremity of each metal ball of the first, second and third pairs of the metal balls has a center and midpoints between connecting lines connecting the centers of each pair of the metal balls of the first, second and third pairs of the metal balls define vertices of a second triangle which is substantially identical to the first triangle and placing the substantially ball-shaped extremity of each of the first, second and third metal balls of the first object into supporting contact on the substantially ball-shaped extremities of the first, second and third pairs of the metal balls, respectively, of the second object,” as recited in amended Claim 10. Archibald is believed to merely disclose the members 18, 20, 22, 32, 34, 36 secured to the surfaces 12, 28 of the first and second plate (10, 26) by welding

and seating the members 32, 34, 36 upon the members 18, 20, 22.³ Further, each of the welded members 20, 22 does not have a substantially ball-shaped extremity. Furthermore, the mere fact that references can be combined or modified does not render the resultant combination obvious unless the prior art also suggests the desirability of the combination.⁴ Archibald suggests that machining planar grooves or impressions into a rigid material is a difficult process. Clearly, Archibald does not have any motivations to make holes to the plates (10, 26).⁵ Thus, the subject matter recited in amended Claim 10 is clearly distinguishable from Archibald.

In addition, Miura is not believed to teach “making first, second, and third indentations in the first object, subsequently fitting first, second and third metal balls each having a substantially ball-shaped extremity into the first, second and third indentations, respectively, made in the first object, wherein a center of each of the first, second and third metal balls of the first object defines a vertex of a first triangle, making first, second and third pairs of indentations in the second object, subsequently fitting a substantially ball-shaped extremity of each of the first, second and third pairs of metal balls into the first, second and third pairs of indentations, respectively, made in the second object, wherein the substantially ball-shaped extremity of each metal ball of the first, second and third pairs of the metal balls has a center and midpoints between connecting lines connecting the centers of each pair of the metal balls of the first, second and third pairs of the metal balls define vertices of a second triangle which is substantially identical to the first triangle and placing the substantially ball-shaped extremity of each of the first, second and third metal balls of the first object into supporting contact on the substantially ball-shaped extremities of the first,

³ See Archibald, Column 3, line 1 to, Column 4, line 16.

⁴ In re Mills, 916 F.2d 680, 16 USPQ2d 1430 (Fed. Cir. 1990).

⁵ See Archibald, Column 4, line 17 to, line 24.

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second and third pairs of the metal balls, respectively, of the second object," as recited in amended Claim 10. Thus, the subject matter recited in amended Claim 10 is clearly distinguishable from Miura.

Because neither Archibald nor Miura discloses the subject matter as recited in amended Claims 1 and 10, even the combined teachings of these cited references would not in any way render the subject matter recited in amended Claims 1 and 10 obvious.

Likewise, independent Claim 11 includes subject matter substantially similar to what is recited in Claim 1 to the extent discussed above. Thus, Claim 11 is also distinguishable from Archibald and Miura.

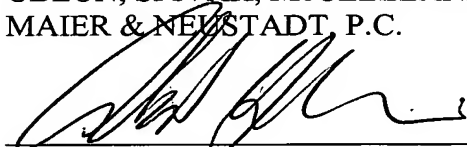
For the foregoing reasons, Claims 1, 10 and 11 are believed to be allowable. Furthermore, since Claims 2, 3, 5-8 and 12-17 depend directly or indirectly from either Claim 1 or 11, substantially the same arguments set forth above also apply to these dependent claims. Hence, Claims 2, 3, 5-8 and 12-17 are believed to be allowable as well.

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In view of the amendments and discussions presented above, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance, and an early action favorable to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT P.C.



Gregory J. Maier
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 25,599

Akihiro Yamazaki
Registration No. 46,155

Customer Number

22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 08/03)

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